

# Executive Child Development Center, Inc. – Parent Handbook

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### Introduction:

ECDC is a non-profit, parent corporation providing child care for the National Institutes of Health employees (NIH) and federal employees. The members and Board of Directors are composed of the parents of the children enrolled in the child care program. The Center has been open and operating since 1975. ECDC is licensed by the Maryland Child Care Administration and has a Certificate of Approval from the Maryland Department of Education for the Preschool and Kindergarten programs. The Center is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

### Description of the Program:

#### **Philosophy:**

ECDC provides a warm, nurturing, and safe environment where children get to do what children like to do: play games, learn new skills, talk with their friends. We offer a curriculum program that allows children to learn at their own rate and make their own choices. There is a wide range of activities including sports, reading, games, long-term activities, and most importantly, projects generated by the children's own ideas. Our activities reflect the fact that children's needs, interests, and abilities change with their age.

#### **Children:**

ECDC serves approximately 260 children ages six weeks through twelve years of diverse economic and ethnic backgrounds. School-age children attend Wyngate, Luxmanor, Farmland, Tilden Middle School, and several private schools in the area. The Montgomery County Public Schools provides morning and afternoon busing for school-age children who attend Luxmanor Elementary, Farmland Elementary, and Tilden Middle schools. ECDC buses children to and from Wyngate Elementary.

The children at ECDC benefit socially and intellectually from being in a multi-cultural environment which allows them to learn respect and appreciation for people of different countries and backgrounds.

#### **Staff:**

ECDC is known for its highly qualified personnel. Our policy is to employ teachers of mixed ethnic backgrounds, and to provide children with a balance of both male and female teachers. All staff must submit and be found suitable for work with children by the Federal Protective Services Security Bureau.

#### **Parent Participation:**

Parents of children enrolled in ECDC programs are encouraged to participate in the program. We invite you to visit the Center anytime. It is the responsibility of the parents to read announcements and return forms and field trip fees. Please check the bulletin boards and your child's classroom mailbox daily for information about activities, projects, trips, and special notices. Parents are invited to participate on ECDC's parent advisory committee and Board of Directors. Additionally, NIH hosts the Child Care Board, which advises NIH on broad child care issues.

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## Parent/Teacher Conferences:

Staff members will schedule conferences at least annually and at a parent's request to discuss the progress of their child and any problems that have occurred. Parents are encouraged to visit and participate in classroom activities and field trips. Please arrange these visits with the appropriate teacher.

## Program Evaluation:

We are continually evaluating our curricula, policies, and procedures. Annually, we will ask you to fill out formal evaluation forms. Your comments and suggestions are always welcome, so please communicate with us. No concern is too small! The ECDC staff meets regularly to evaluate their own curriculum programs.

## General Schedule:

### Calendar:

ECDC is open 7:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, including an all-day Summer Camp Program. The Center is closed all federal holidays and two professional days per year.

### Early Drop-off Policy:

We will not be responsible for children left unsupervised before our official opening time at 7:30 a.m.

### Late Pick-up Penalties:

If your child is picked up after 6:00 p.m., you will owe a late fee of \$5.00 for each five-minute period, or portion thereof, after the scheduled time. This late pick-up fee is due to the teacher immediately at the time of pick-up. If your child is picked up over thirty minutes late, he/she may not be admitted to the Center the following day.

### Holiday Schedule:

The Center will be closed on the following days, in addition to one professional day at the end of the school year and one professional day at the beginning of the school year. There will be no refund or credit against the tuition fee for these days:

- New Year's Day
- Presidents Day
- MLK Jr. Birthday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Columbus Day
- Veterans Day
- Thanksgiving Day
- Christmas Eve
- Christmas Day

### Inclement Weather Closings:

ECDC is closed only if the federal government is closed. If the Center closes early under these conditions (after already having opened), staff will wait until all children have been picked up. Parents should pick up their children as soon as possible, as the late fee policy will be enforced two hours after the federal government closes. If a parent cannot be reached by that time, the child will be allowed to go home with another parent or teacher previously authorized by the parents.

In the event that MCPS closes for the entire day (not the Central Office), the following policies will take effect:

- The Center will open at 7:30 a.m. for full-time children.

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- The School-Age Program will be open 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. with optional pre-paid sign-up for 9:00 to 2:00 (fifteen dollars per day). AM/PM children may come when the Center opens at 7:30 a.m. PM children may come only at 9:00 a.m. All School-Age children must sign up and pay in advance for 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.
- If MCPS closes early, the School-Age program opens at that time.
- If MCPS opens late, the Center is open at 7:30 a.m. for all school-age children enrolled in the morning programs. After-School only children may not attend.
- If MCPS is closed for an entire day or has early closing/late opening, Extended-Kindergartners (9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.) may not attend. Refer to the specific handbook section for Kindergarten Complement programs.

### Enrollment:

#### **Eligibility/Equal Opportunity:**

ECDC is open to all children, ages 6 weeks to 12 years. Children are admitted to programs without regard to race, creed, sex, disability, or socioeconomic class. NO discrimination is practiced in the treatment of children in the programs or in program administration or operation.

#### **Annual School-Age Registration:**

School-Age children must be registered annually for the following school year. The registration period occurs in January and/or February.

#### **Priority Enrollment:**

Children enrolled in ECDC's federally-funded space will be selected from the NIH Child Care Waiting List in the priority given to ECDC. Parents should refer to the NIH child care web site for waiting list information.

Children whose parent's or guardian's employment status changes to non-federal employment may remain at ECDC under the following conditions:

- Children enrolled within an infant, toddler, or preschool program may remain for up to two (2) months.
- Children enrolled within an all-day kindergarten and/or before and after school program may remain until the end of that current school year or two (2) months, whichever is longer.

#### **Trial Period:**

Your child is accepted for enrollment in ECDC for a trial period of one month. We will make all reasonable efforts to work with you and your child to help solve any adjustment problems.

### General Information:

#### **Absences:**

Please notify the Center if your child will be absent on a specific day. For vacations, please notify the Center one week in advance. You are responsible for paying the full biweekly tuition when your child is enrolled in the Center, even if your child is absent due to illness or vacation.

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## **Addresses/Telephone Numbers:**

The Center must be notified if there is a change in your address and/or home or office telephone numbers. The names, addresses and phone numbers of persons to contact in an emergency (if you are not available) must be provided. The names and telephone numbers of those persons authorized to pick up your child must also be on file. Please review all emergency card information on an annual basis.

## **Clothing:**

All outer clothing and change of clothing items should be labeled. An extra set of clothing should be available at the Center. Children should be dressed warmly during cold winter months, including boots, mittens, and snow pants on snow days and days following snow, so that children can play outdoors. We encourage children to wear casual clothing.

## **Toys:**

Toys may be brought to the Center if they are suitable for sharing with other classmates. The Center does not assume responsibility for the loss or breakage of these toys. Toy guns are not allowed.

## **Birthdays:**

The Center encourages the parents of children having birthdays to participate and to provide nutritious birthday foods for a party. Please do not send candy, gum, or other junk food. Please let the teacher know when you are planning a birthday celebration.

## **Health and Safety:**

### **Emergency Evacuation Policy:**

Children who are capable of walking will be trained how to exit the building in an orderly manner during emergencies and drills. These procedures will include establishing a “buddy” system, line drills, holding onto a rope, etc. Non-walking children will be placed in evacuation devices such as evacuation cribs on sturdy wheels and will be rolled out of the Center to our assembly point. Our child care staff will maintain an up-to-date roster of the children present. The supervisor will be responsible for verifying the safe evacuation of all children listed on the roster.

The Director will be responsible for physically checking all areas within the Center. The NIH Division of Employee Services will be notified of the evacuation and its progress. Parents will not be allowed to remove a child from the Center’s custody until we have accounted for all children. Parents should refrain from telephoning the Center during practice evacuation drills and emergencies.

Upon evacuation of the facility, no one will be allowed to re-enter the facility until an official “all-clear” signal is given. All child care staff and support personnel will be trained in emergency/evacuation procedures. Emergency drills will be held at least once a month.

If children need to be relocated during an actual emergency, our relocation site will be the Montgomery County Aquatic Center at 5900 Executive Boulevard, Rockville, Maryland or 6130 Executive Boulevard, Rockville, Maryland.

### **Safety Rules:**

Our Center has been designed to provide children with a safe and healthy environment. The following is a list of safety rules for all programs at the Center. Please be aware of them. Discuss them with your children.

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- **YOU MUST PARK IN DESIGNATED PARKING SPACES.** The front entrance must be clear for buses and emergency vehicles.
- Do not leave children in a car without supervision.
- Supervise your children carefully while walking in the parking lot.
- If you have made arrangements to have your child picked up by someone not listed on your child's emergency card, please notify us with the person's name and relationship to the family. The person may be required to show photo identification.

### **Nutrition:**

ECDC offers breakfast and an afternoon snack to children ages two and up. Parents are required to provide a non-perishable nutritious lunch if their children are at the center mid-day. Due to increasing numbers of severe nut allergies, ECDC is requiring that nuts are not served at the center. This includes nut butter and candies with nuts. Soy products are acceptable.

For further details regarding health and safety issues, please refer to ECDC's Health and Safety Manual.

### **Medical Policies:**

#### **Medical Requirements:**

Please contact the ECDC administration for the appropriate health forms.

#### **Illness:**

Please call the Center if your child will not be in school due to illness, and specify the illness. Do not send your child to the Center if he/she has had a fever above 101 degrees in the preceding 24 hours, or has vomiting, diarrhea, or a severe cold with constant cough and nasal discharge. If your child develops a fever above 101 degrees while at the Center or shows other signs of illness, you will be requested to take him/her home.

#### **Communicable Diseases:**

Parents are required to notify the Director if their child develops a communicable disease (mumps, measles, chicken pox, rubella, etc.). Health information is regularly provided by the area health departments. This information is communicated to parents regarding outbreaks and precautions for communicable diseases. If an outbreak of vaccine-preventable disease occurs, all under-immunized children (including those exempted) will be excluded from the Center for the duration of possible exposure.

#### **Re-admission Note:**

Absence from the Center due to a communicable illness may require a written statement from the physician before the child is readmitted to the Center. This statement may be faxed to the Center.

#### **Medical Emergencies:**

Every effort will be made to contact the parents immediately in the event of an emergency. If the parents cannot be reached, the child will be taken to Shady Grove Hospital in an ambulance.

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## Administration of Medication:

Staff members will administer prescription/non-prescription medication to a child if the following criteria are met:

- Medication order form is signed by parent/guardian, and the name and dosage of medication, dates, and/or times/conditions for administration are written on the form.
- Prescription medication must be labeled by the pharmacy or physician before the Center administers the medication.
- The parent/guardian must give the first dose of the prescribed medication.
- Non-prescription medication may be administered from its original container only once unless a licensed health practitioner approves the administration and dosage on the medication form or prescription slip for the child.
- No medication is to be placed in lunch boxes or backpacks. All medication must be given directly to ECDC staff by a parent/guardian.

## Financial Policies:

### Budget:

ECDC is committed to affordable, quality child care for all families needing services. Parent tuition provides the greatest source of operating income. Additionally, ECDC participates in the Department of Social Services Child Care Subsidy Program, the Working Parents Assistance Program, and the Maryland State Child and Adult Food Program. Other sources of funds are derived from fundraising efforts and private contributions.

### Tuition:

Tuition payments are due on Mondays for the following two-week period. Payment must be mailed or delivered directly to the Center office by the end of the first tuition week or a \$10 late fee will be charged. Late fees not paid will be deducted from the tuition deposit when the child leaves the Center.

Tuition payments must be made if a child is absent for vacation or illness. Fee adjustments may be possible for extended illness with the approval of the Director or Assistant Director.

A two-week deposit is required and will be applied to the tuition for the last two weeks the child is in the program. Written notice must be given thirty days before the child leaves the program.

A \$25.00 fee will be charged for checks returned because of insufficient funds.

### Late Payment:

If the Center has not received any tuition payment by the sixth day after payment is due, the Center may refuse to admit your child until you are able to pay the amount. If the Center has not received your payment by the thirteenth day after payment is due, your child's enrollment in the Center may be terminated and his/her space will be offered to another child. You may not be entitled to a refund of your deposit.

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### **Damage Charges:**

You may be held financially responsible for any property damage due to destructive behavior of your child.

### **Grievance Procedure:**

Grievance complaints are best handled informally and expediently between the involved parties. ECDC staff are interested in providing the best service to your family, so feel free to communicate your concerns, no matter how small.

If the problem is not successfully resolved through communication with the staff and Director, a parent member of the Board of Directors can serve as an arbitrator. If the problem is not resolved, the Child Care Programs Manager will assist in the resolution.